

The Cost of the Iraq War for Grand Rapids

As of September 24, 2007, the Iraq War has cost the United States over \$454 billion dollars.

Of that \$454 billion, the war has cost taxpayers in Michigan over \$12 billion, with an estimated \$237 million coming from taxpayers in Grand Rapids.

That money could have—and should have—been used to fund social programs within our community. The money could have:

- Built 2,141 additional housing units
- Hired 4,122 public school teachers for one year
- Paid for 31,507 children to attend Head Start for one year
- Insured 142,442 children for one year
- Provided four-year scholarships for 11,531 students at public universities

Additionally, the war has had significant human costs:

- At least 144 soldiers from Michigan have been killed in the war.
- At least 6 soldiers from Grand Rapids.
- At least 655,000 Iraqi civilians have been killed as a result of the invasion and occupation.

Since the war began, Grand Rapids area congressional Representative Vern Ehlers has voted for every funding package and has consistently opposed any legislation aimed at ending the occupation of Iraq. Similarly, Michigan's two Senators—Carl Levin and Debbie Stabenow—while initially opposing the war, have voted for every funding package and have expressed support for a continued US presence in Iraq.



A VOTE FOR MORE WAR

THE COST TO MICHIGAN

August 2007

With Congress' recent vote for an additional \$100 billion more in war spending, the total spent or allocated for the Iraq War alone rises to nearly half a trillion dollars. The cost to taxpayers of Michigan now totals \$12.1 billion.¹

The taxpayer costs of the Iraq War to Michigan

Already appropriated	\$10.0 billion
Appropriated in May	\$2.1 billion
Total	\$12.1 billion

In the lead up to the war, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget stated that it would cost between \$50-\$60 billion. The White House discounted its own economic advisor when he suggested that the war could cost between \$100-\$200 billion.

Even the half a trillion dollar price tag does not begin to cover future costs. The administration seeks \$142 billion in more war funding for the next fiscal year. Since the war is deficit-financed, interest payments alone could rise to at least one hundred billion dollars. Spending on veterans' health care and disability payments for the many severely wounded soldiers could also mount to hundreds of billions of dollars.²

After four years, the Iraq War continues unabated:

- ◆ An average of 163 daily attacks by insurgents and militia was recorded in May, 2007—roughly twice the average one year earlier—while daily attacks in Baghdad increased from 28.9 to 50.7 attacks per day, despite the recent “surge”. Meanwhile, Baghdad residents receive on average only 5.6 hours of electricity per day.³

The human costs⁶

- ▷ 3,653 U.S. soldiers dead
 - 138 from Michigan
- ▷ 26,953 U.S. soldiers wounded
 - 875 from Michigan
- ▷ hundreds of thousands of Iraqis dead
- ▷ over 2 million Iraqis displaced in Iraq
- ▷ another 2 million Iraqi refugees in other countries

- ◆ Apart from the tens of thousands of reported U.S. casualties, nearly one in five returning veterans suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder.⁴

- ◆ More than 60 percent of Iraqis approved of attacking US-led forces and almost 80 percent of Iraqis believe that the U.S. military presence is provoking more conflict than it is preventing.⁵

Notes: ¹NPP's estimate of the cost of the Iraq War includes only incremental *budgetary* costs, not interest costs or future costs. The number is based on the analysis of legislation appropriating funding for the Iraq War and Congressional Research Service reports and includes \$78 billion of the additional \$100 billion in war spending passed in May by Congress. State breakdowns are based on the share of taxes paid by each state into the federal funds budget according to IRS data. ²See L. Bilmes and J. Stiglitz, 'The economic costs of the Iraq War.' Cost depends on number of years the war lasts, interest rates and other factors. ³Brookings Institution, *Iraq Index*, July 30, 2007. ⁴A National Center for PTSD study indicated that 18% of veterans returning from Iraq had PTSD. ⁵Program on International Policy Attitudes, 'The Iraqi public on the U.S. presence and the future of Iraq,' September 27, 2006. ⁶Figures from Iraq Coalition Casualties as of July 31, 2007, *The Lancet*, and UNHCR.

The Cost of the Iraq War to Your Congressional District

The following table lists the cost of the Iraq War, including the \$100 billion recently appropriated by Congress, for each congressional district in the state of Michigan. Alongside the cost is what the people of Michigan could have if the money was spent locally instead.

<i>Congressional District and Representative</i>	<i>Cost of the Iraq War</i>	<i>Number of children that could have been provided with health care for the length of the Iraq War</i>	<i>OR Number of affordable housing units that could have been built</i>	<i>OR Number of elementary schools that could have been built</i>
<i>01 Stupak</i>	\$607.07 million	103,733	4,894	55
<i>02 Hoekstra</i>	\$759.21 million	129,730	6,120	68
<i>03 Ehlers</i>	\$818.08 million	139,788	6,595	74
<i>04 Camp</i>	\$695.06 million	118,768	5,603	63
<i>05 Kildee</i>	\$706.82 million	120,777	5,698	64
<i>06 Upton</i>	\$729.1 million	124,585	5,877	66
<i>07 Walberg</i>	\$804.85 million	137,528	6,488	72
<i>08 Rogers</i>	\$935.15 million	159,793	7,538	84
<i>09 Knollenberg</i>	\$1.16 billion	199,053	9,390	105
<i>10 Miller</i>	\$938.58 million	160,379	7,566	85
<i>11 McCotter</i>	\$1.05 billion	180,123	8,497	95
<i>12 Levin</i>	\$833.44 million	142,413	6,718	75
<i>13 Kilpatrick</i>	\$555.43 million	94,909	4,477	50
<i>14 Conyers Jr.</i>	\$643 million	109,872	5,183	58
<i>15 Dingell</i>	\$872.12 million	149,023	7,030	79

Notes: The amount for each congressional district is based on the state total, and the population and income level of the congressional district. For more information and more examples of 'trade-offs,' go to <http://nationalpriorities.org/database>.

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CONGRESS VOTES FOR MORE WAR FUNDING

June 2007

With Congress' recent vote for an additional \$100 billion in war spending, the total spent or allocated for the Iraq War alone rises to nearly half a trillion dollars.¹

In the lead up to the war, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget stated that the Iraq War would cost only between \$50-\$60 billion. The White House discounted its own economic advisor when he suggested that the war could cost between \$100-\$200 billion.

The human costs²

- ◆ 3,513 U.S. soldiers dead
- ◆ 25,950 U.S. soldiers wounded
- ◆ Hundreds of thousands of Iraqis dead
- ◆ 1.7 million Iraqis displaced in Iraq
- ◆ 2 million Iraqi refugees in other countries

The half a trillion dollar price tag does not even begin to cover future costs. The war is deficit-financed, and future spending on veterans' health care and disability payments will be substantial. One estimate that included the future budgetary and economic costs exceeded \$2 trillion.³

The cost to American taxpayers is \$456 billion so far. If that money were spent locally, the following could have been provided.⁴

- ▶ 5.7 million people could have been provided with health care coverage each year since the war began; AND
- ▶ 1 million affordable housing units could have been built; AND
- ▶ 430,000 school teachers could have been hired since the war began; AND
- ▶ 4.7 million students could have received tuition and fees for four years at a state university.

Notes: ¹NPP's estimate of the cost of the Iraq War includes only incremental *budgetary* costs, not interest costs or future costs. The number is based on the analysis of legislation appropriating funding for the Iraq War and Congressional Research Service reports and includes \$78 billion of the \$100 billion in additional war spending. State breakdowns are based on the share of taxes paid by each state into the federal funds budget according to IRS data. ²Iraq Coalition Casualty Count, Dept. of Defense Directorate of Information Operations and Reports, *The Lancet*, and UNHCR. ³L. Bilmes and J. Stiglitz, 'Encore,' *The Milken Institute Review*, 4th Quarter 2006; includes economic and future budgetary costs. ⁴City breakdowns are based on population and relative income and state breakdowns; trade-offs are based on state averages.

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For every day the war continues, more lives lost, more dollars wasted

▶ **More dead:** May was the deadliest month in 2007 for U.S. soldiers with 128 killed.

▶ **More dollars:** Congress is already debating another \$142 billion in war spending for next fiscal year, most of which will be for the Iraq War. The military budget is already higher than at any point since World War II.

Nearly half a trillion dollars? On average:

- \$275 million every day
- \$11 million each hour
- \$191,000 each minute
- \$3,180 each second
- \$4,100 for every household in the U.S.

▶ **Permanent scars:** Apart from the tens of thousands of reported U.S. casualties, nearly one in five returning veterans suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder.⁵ The human and financial costs of this war will haunt future generations to come.

▶ **Americans know:** A poll released in late May showed that 61 percent of Americans now believe we should have stayed out of Iraq altogether. Three-quarters of Americans perceive the war as going very badly.⁶

▶ **U.S. not wanted:** More than 60 percent of Iraqis approve of attacking US-led forces and almost 80 percent of Iraqis believe that the U.S. military presence is provoking more conflict than it is preventing. Moreover, a poll in four Muslim countries showed that very large majorities believe that the U.S. seeks to undermine Islam, and that preventing terrorism is not the primary goal of the “war on terrorism.”⁷

Notes: ⁵A National Center for PTSD study indicated that 18% of veterans returning from Iraq had PTSD. ⁶Poll shows view of Iraq War is most negative since start, *New York Times*, May 27, 2007. ⁷Program on International Policy Attitudes, ‘The Iraqi public on the U.S. presence and the future of Iraq,’ September 27, 2006; PIPA, ‘Muslim public opinion on U.S. policy, attacks on civilians and Al Qaeda,’ April 24, 2007.